

Background

At its summer 2025 meeting, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) reviewed a July 29, 2025 memorandum from the Office of the Attorney General of the United States regarding the legality of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies.

In response, CODA reviewed its accreditation standards in light of the evolving legal and regulatory environment. Following discussion, CODA directed that the Accreditation Standards for all disciplines related to diversity of faculty, staff, and students be suspended indefinitely. Additionally, CODA amended the intent statements and examples of evidence of Standards related to diversity of faculty, staff, and students across multiple dental education programs.

CODA further directed that, during the period of suspension, CODA will take no action in whole or in part based on the Standards, including but not limited to review during a program's site visit, consideration of complaints, and revision of Standards. Accordingly, during the suspension period, CODA has not evaluated the suspended Standards in site visits, complaint reviews, or accreditation decisions.

Throughout the past year, CODA has continuously monitored federal activities related to DEI as well as changes proposed to the regulations governing accreditors recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE).

Summary

In anticipation of the proposed changes and in light of the USDE's enforcement of positions outlined in the July 2025 memorandum, CODA action is appropriate at this time to address the Standards at issue, whose enforcement is suspended but which are still in effect.

Resolutions:

Resolved, that the Commission on Dental Accreditation rescind Dental Standard 1-4 (policies and practices for diversity and ongoing systemic efforts) and Dental Standard 4-4 (admissions policies for recruitment of diverse student population) from the Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs effective immediately, and be it further;

Resolved, that the Commission on Dental Accreditation direct no changes or revisions to current Dental Standard 1-3 (commitment to humanistic culture) of the Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs, and be it further;

Resolved, that the Commission on Dental Accreditation rescind Dental Therapy Standard 1-4 (policies and practices for diversity and ongoing systemic efforts) and Dental Therapy Standard 4-2 (admissions policies for recruitment of diverse student population) from the Accreditation Standards for Dental Therapy Education Programs effective immediately, and be it further;

Resolved, that the Commission on Dental Accreditation direct no changes or revisions to the current Dental Therapy Standard 1-3 (commitment to humanistic culture) of the Accreditation Standards for Dental Therapy Education Programs, and be it further;

Resolved, that the Commission on Dental Accreditation adopt the Accreditation Standards 1-2 for Dental Hygiene Education Programs intent and examples of evidence that were previously revised at the Summer 2025 Commission Meeting will now be permanently removed from the standard language and be adopted for immediate implementation follow the Summer 2026 Commission Meeting, and be it further;

Resolved, that the Commission on Dental Accreditation rescind Standard 1-11 of the Accreditation Standards for Advanced Dental Education Programs in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, effective immediately, and approve all necessary conforming revisions to related standards and associated accreditation documents.

Predoctoral Dental

Standard 1-3

The dental education program **must** have a stated commitment to a humanistic culture and learning environment that is regularly evaluated.

Intent:

The dental education program should ensure collaboration, mutual respect, cooperation, and harmonious relationships between and among administrators, faculty, students, staff, and alumni. The program should also support and cultivate the development of professionalism and ethical behavior ~~by fostering diversity of faculty, students, and staff, open communication, leadership, and scholarship.~~

Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:

Established policies regarding ethical behavior by faculty, staff and students that are regularly reviewed and readily available

Student, faculty, and patient groups involved in promoting **diversity**, professionalism and/or leadership support for their activities

Focus groups and/or surveys directed towards gathering information on student, faculty, patient, and alumni perceptions of the cultural environment

~~Standard 1-4~~

~~The dental school **must** have policies and practices to:~~

- ~~a. achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff;~~
- ~~b. engage in ongoing systematic and focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds; and~~
- ~~c. systematically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity.~~

~~Intent:~~

~~The dental school should develop strategies to address the dimensions of diversity including, structure, curriculum and institutional climate. The dental school should articulate its expectations regarding diversity across its academic community in the context of local and national responsibilities, and regularly assess how well such expectations are being achieved. Schools could incorporate elements of diversity in their planning that include, but are not limited to, gender, racial, ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic. Schools should establish focused, significant, and sustained programs to recruit and retain suitably diverse students, faculty, and staff.~~

~~Standard 4-4~~

~~Admission policies and procedures **must** be designed to include recruitment and admission of a diverse student population.~~

~~Intent 4-1 to 4-4:~~

~~The dental education curriculum is a scientifically oriented program which is rigorous and intensive. Admissions criteria and procedures should ensure the selection of a diverse student body with the potential for successfully completing the program. The administration and faculty, in cooperation with appropriate institutional personnel, should establish admissions procedures that are non-discriminatory and ensure the quality of the program.~~

Dental Therapy

Standard 1-3

The dental education program **must** have a stated commitment to a humanistic culture and learning environment that is regularly evaluated.

Intent:

The dental education program should ensure collaboration, mutual respect, cooperation, and harmonious relationships between and among administrators, faculty, students, staff, and alumni. The program should also support and cultivate the development of professionalism and ethical behavior ~~by fostering diversity of faculty, students, and staff, open communication, leadership, and scholarship.~~

Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:

Established policies regarding ethical behavior by faculty, staff and students that are regularly reviewed and readily available

Student, faculty, and patient groups involved in promoting **diversity**, professionalism and/or leadership support for their activities

Focus groups and/or surveys directed towards gathering information on student, faculty, patient, and alumni perceptions of the cultural environment

~~Standard 1-4~~

~~The dental school **must** have policies and practices to:~~

~~achieve appropriate levels of diversity among its students, faculty and staff;
engage in ongoing systematic and focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds; and
systematically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity.~~

~~Intent:~~

~~The program should develop strategies to address the dimensions of diversity including, structure, curriculum and institutional climate. The program should articulate its expectations regarding diversity across its academic community in the context of local and national responsibilities, and regularly assess how well such expectations are being achieved. Programs could incorporate elements of diversity in their planning that include, but are not limited to, gender, racial, ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic. Programs should establish focused, significant, and sustained programs to recruit and retain suitably diverse students, faculty, and staff.~~

~~Standard 4-2~~

~~Admission policies and procedures **must** be designed to include recruitment and admission of a diverse student population.~~

~~Intent:~~

~~Admissions criteria and procedures should ensure the selection of a diverse student body with the potential for successfully completing the program. The administration and faculty, in cooperation with appropriate institutional personnel, should establish admissions procedures that are non-discriminatory and ensure the quality of the program.~~

Dental Hygiene

Standard 1-2

The program **must** have a stated commitment to a humanistic culture and learning environment that is regularly evaluated.

Intent:

The program should ensure collaboration, mutual respect, cooperation, and harmonious relationships between and among administrators, faculty, students, staff, and alumni. The program should also support and cultivate the development of professionalism and ethical behavior. ~~by fostering diversity of faculty, students, and staff, open communication, leadership, and scholarship.~~

Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:

Established policies regarding ethical behavior by faculty, staff and students that are regularly reviewed and readily available

Student, faculty, and patient groups involved in promoting **diversity**, professionalism and/or leadership support for their activities

Focus groups and/or surveys directed towards gathering information on student, faculty, patient, and alumni perceptions of the cultural environment

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Standard 1-11

~~The program and sponsoring institution's collaborative responsibilities **must** include an ongoing effort for recruitment and retention of a diverse and inclusive workforce of faculty, residents and staff.~~

~~Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:~~

~~Nondiscriminatory policies and practices at all organizational levels.
Mission and policy statements which promote diversity and inclusion.
Evidence of training in diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging.~~

Standard 2-1.7

The program **must** have a stated commitment to a humanistic culture and learning environment that is regularly evaluated.

***Intent:** The program should ensure collaboration, mutual respect, cooperation, and harmonious relationships between and among administrators, faculty, residents, staff, and alumni. The program should also support and cultivate the development of professionalism and ethical behavior ~~by fostering diversity of faculty, students, and staff, open communication, leadership, and scholarship.~~*

Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:

Established policies regarding ethical behavior by faculty, staff and residents that are regularly reviewed and readily available
Resident, faculty, and patient groups involved in promoting ~~diversity~~, professionalism and/or leadership support for their activities
Focus groups and/or surveys directed towards gathering information on resident, faculty, patient, and alumni perceptions of the cultural environment

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